



**Cottonwood Extension District
Barton County 4-H Newsletter
February 2026**

Well, I don't know about you all, but I certainly didn't enjoy that cold weather! Like any good mid-westerner, I'll stick to the "It wouldn't be so cold, if it wasn't for that darn wind!" saying. I hope everyone made it through the cold okay without too many issues. Just remember, we're one day closer to Spring!

If you're reading this today, we haven't quite made it to Club Days yet, but I want to go ahead and say congratulations to those who qualified to go on to Regional Club Days on March 13th here in Great Bend. Your hard work paid off, and we know you'll do a great job of representing yourself and Barton County 4-H! If you didn't qualify. That's okay. Take this time to learn from the experience, look over the judge's feedback, and begin to set goals and make a plan to achieve those goals next year. I believe in you!

As we get closer to Spring, we'll be thinking about getting livestock tagging done for the County Fair. Beef weigh-in and tagging will be from 9-10:30 on February 28th at Countryside Veterinary Clinic. Small animal tagging will be done by appointment; contact Alicia at the office to set up a time. Please get those appointments made as soon as possible, and not wait until the last minute.

We are currently exploring the possibility of offering some meeting times to practice livestock judging and skiallthon skills in the hopes of sending a team to the State 4-H Livestock Sweepstakes in Manhattan during the month of August. Please reach out to me if this is something you would be interested in.

If you ever need anything. That's what I'm here for.

Every day is an opportunity for a new adventure!

Benjamin T. Sims

Follow us on Facebook: [Cottonwood Extension District](#) and [Barton County 4-H Members](#)

Website: www.cottonwood.ksu.edu

Office Number: 620-793-1910

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Upcoming Events



Feb 8 Registration due for 4-H Day with K-State Women's Basketball (p. 14)

Feb 9 Livestock Committee Meeting at 6:30 pm - Extension office

Feb 15-16 [4-H Citizenship in Action](#), Topeka

Feb 16 Jr. Leaders @ 6 pm & 4-H Council at 7:30 pm - 4-H Ed. Buildings

Feb 21-22 [4-H Horse Panorama](#), Rock Springs Ranch

Feb 28 Beef Weigh-In (9-10:30 AM) - Countryside Veterinary Clinic

March 1 Kansas 4-H Day with K-State Women's Basketball

March 4 Great Bend Youth Entrepreneurship Challenge - [More Information](#)

March 13 4-H Regional Club Day, Great Bend High School

March 17 Volunteer Meeting - Extension Office - (12:15 -- 12:45)

March 18 YQCA, 1:00 - 2:00 @ Extension office

March 7 Junior Beef Producer Day - Registration due Feb. 13 (p. 12)

March 21 NW Super Saturday Judging Contest, Hays

March 29 Showmanship Clinic - Barton Co. Fairgrounds Expo III

April 11 Junior Sheep Producer Day - Registration due March 20 (p. 13)

June 24-28 Barton County Fair

Interested in testing your evaluation skills with a day of fun and learning?

Join 4-H youth on March 21 for Super Saturday at FHSU! This event alternates sites with Colby Community College, and the morning involves multiple judging contests such as Life Skills, Entomology, Crop ID, and Photography. In the afternoon, you can test your livestock judging skills or participate in one of several project-related activities, such as Engineering & Technology or Visual Arts.

Watch for more information to come out!

Barton County 4-H Shooting Sports

Air Rifle/Pistol - The air rifle and air pistol projects are disciplines of the 4-H Shooting Sports Program. It is for 4-H members aged 8 to 18 years. In this project, the youth learn firearm safety, parts of and the operation of firearms, three shooting positions (prone, kneeling, and standing) for the rifle portion, shooting range rules and etiquette, and have the opportunity to shoot in a safe, supervised environment. The weekly meetings are held at an indoor range set up specifically for the air rifle/air pistol projects. All rifles, pistols, pellets, targets, and equipment are provided by the Barton County 4-H Air Rifle program. The 1st six weeks are mandatory to complete all the required training needed for the project. There is a \$20 charge per member to cover the costs of pellets and targets. From January through March, there are opportunities to compete in matches with other 4-H members from across the state, with a state match that takes place in April for those who qualify. Practices are held at the Foundry Community Church at 5401 Broadway in Great Bend.

Small Bore Rifle/Pistol - THE 1ST SIX WEEKS OF THE AIR RIFLE/AIR PISTOL PROGRAM ARE MANDATORY FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE SMALL BORE PROJECT. Those six weeks start on November 11, 2025.

Starting Range Date for Small Bore > The 1st Wednesday in June 2026

The smallbore project is a discipline of the 4-H Shooting Sports Program. It is for 4-H members aged 10 to 18. This project extends the knowledge gained in the air rifle/air pistol project. In this project, the youth learn firearm safety, the parts of and operation of small bore (.22 caliber) rifles and/or pistols, three shooting positions (prone, kneeling, and standing) for rifle, how the environment and weather affect rifle performance, shooting range rules and etiquette, and have the opportunity to shoot in a safe, supervised environment. The weekly meetings are held at a local gun club with an area reserved for use by the 4-H small-bore program. In this project, most rifles are provided by the 4-H members (the program does have 3 rifles that can be used if someone needs one), and all pistols must be provided by 4-H members. Any firearms provided by 4-H members must pass inspection by the shooting instructors. Ammunition is provided by the 4-H member and must meet certain specifications. It can be purchased through the 4-H small-bore program. There is a \$10 charge per member to cover the costs of targets. During late summer, mainly August, there are opportunities to compete in matches with other 4-H members from across the state. A state match takes place in October for those who qualify.

Archery - Practices will start in early February at the 4-H Educational Buildings on Hwy 281. Watch for more information. **4-H Shooting Sports is a great tool for teaching discipline, firearm safety, and accountability. For more information, reach out to John Reh at 620-786-0052 for rifle questions and Dustin Wyant at 620-617-6212 for Archery questions.**





2026 Western National Roundup



Cottonwood Extension Districts 4-H'ers from Barton County recently partnered up with 4-H members from Rice and Pawnee Counties to represent Kansas at the 2026 Western National Roundup in Denver, Colorado, on January 7-11.

The team representing the state of Kansas, consisted of Kylee Miessler, Ryann Stryker, Adessa Prosser, and Hadley Fleming.

The team placed 5th in the Written Exam & Slides Phase ; 6th in Team Stations Phase ; 3rd in Judging Phase ; 3rd in Team Problems Phase

This led to the team placing 4th Place Overall!

Top Individual awards went to: Ryann Stryker for her 10th place in Written Exam & Slides phase and Kylee Miessler for her 8th place in Stations phase & 4th in Judging phase leading to her 9th place Overall Individual ranking!!

*Hippology is the study of horses, best described as similar to “the owner’s manual” for horses. Covers everything equine, including history and origins, breeds, anatomy and physiology, genetics, reproductive, riding disciplines, nutrition, tack and equipment, horse industry and horse management.

We’re incredibly proud of all their hard work and how well they represented not only the state, but their units and themselves! Thank you to all those who helped support their trip financially! A BIG thank you to their coaches, Wendy Prosser and Heather Miessler, for organizing the trip and helping them to prepare, and to the countless others who stood in their corner and cheered them on!



Regional Project Records



Barton County sent two Project Record Books to the Regional Screening event, and both were selected to advance to the State Project Record Award Screening! Congratulations to Russell Kern and Samantha Negaard! Russell will advance with his Food & Nutrition project record, and Samantha with her Performing Arts project record!



Project Highlight!



4-H Dog Project!

Our goal is to provide 4-H youth with the knowledge and skills to be a responsible pet owner and have hands-on experience with training. Participants will learn to train their dogs in obedience, showmanship, agility, and rally obedience. They will get to show the skills they have learned and taught their canine while participating in the local dog show. All youth are able to participate, including clover buds. All dog breeds are allowed, they just have to be over 6 months to do showmanship and obedience or 15 months for agility. This is a great project to help youth learn responsibility, decision making, communication skills and strengthen their human-animal bond.

Would you be interested in being a part of the Dog project? Our leaders Clarissa McCormick and JoAnn Gaunt would be happy to talk with you about the opportunity!

4-H Horse Project!

Love horses, but don't own a horse? No problem, a big portion of the 4-H Horse project is learning all about the horse, also known as Hippology. Barton County has a very active group that gets together all year to learn about equine. Topics include breeds, horse coat colors and markings, health and nutrition, anatomy, reproduction, tack and equipment, horse safety, and the different uses and disciplines, to name a few. What do we do with all the knowledge we gain each year? A weekend retreat is held at Rock Springs 4-H Camp, known as Panorama. This event is a fun-filled weekend with other horse project members across the State of Kansas. Youth participate in activities such as horse-related quiz bowl competition, multiple-choice exam of horse questions, stationary examples of matching parts of the horse, types of feeds, etc, demonstrations and project talks involving the horse or the horse industry, equine-related photography contests, equine poster contests, equine advertisement competitions, horse logo competition, and slide show presentation contests. There is something for any member with a passion for our equine friends.

Our Horse project leaders are Wendy Prosser, and Heather Miessler.

2026 4-H Club Day Results
Regional Club Day eligible entries are highlighted in green.

Name	Event	Club	Placing
Lydia Suchy	Show & Share	Busy Buzzers	Participation
George Debes	Project Talk	Cow Creek	Purple
Everett Negaard	Project Talk	Cow Creek	Purple
Emily Hunt	Project Talk	Ellinwood Energizers	Red
Catarina Debes	Jr. Demo/Ill. Talk	Cow Creek	Purple
Brantley Edgerton	Jr. Demo/Ill. Talk	Cow Creek	Purple
Hannah Suchy	Jr. Demo/Ill. Talk	Busy Buzzers	Blue (1st Alt.)
Emaline Debes	Jr. Demo/Ill. Talk	Cow Creek	Blue (2nd Alt.)
Maggie Kern	Jr. Demo/Ill. Talk	Ellinwood Energizers	Blue
Breckynn Edgerton	Jr. Demo/Ill. Talk	Cow Creek	Blue
Austyn Prosser	Jr. Demo/Ill. Talk	Cow Creek	Red
Coy Prosser	Jr. Demo/Ill. Talk	Cow Creek	Red
Elizabeth Martin	Jr. Demo/Ill. Talk	Ellinwood Energizers	Red
Kassie Linsner	Sr. Demo/Ill. Talk	Busy Buzzers	Purple
Brogan Edgerton	Sr. Demo/Ill. Talk	Cow Creek	Purple
Addie Broeder	Sr. Demo/Ill. Talk	Busy Buzzers	Blue (1st Alt.)
Samantha Negaard	Sr. Demo/Ill. Talk	Busy Buzzers	Blue (2nd Alt.)
Zarron Luker	Sr. Demo/Ill. Talk	Ellinwood Energizers	Blue
Lilly Linsner	Sr. Demo/Ill. Talk	Busy Buzzers	Red
Jonas Kern	Extemperaneous Speech	Ellinwood Energizers	Purple
Adessa Prosser	Application/Resume/Interview	Cow Creek	Purple
Russell Kern	Application/Resume/Interview	Ellinwood Energizers	Red
Chloe Vaupel	Music - Piano	Ellinwood Energizers	Purple
Cora Calcara	Music - Piano	Busy Buzzers	Blue (1st Alt.)
Kit Calcara	Music - Piano	Busy Buzzers	Blue
Ensley Vaupel	Music - Piano	Ellinwood Energizers	Blue
Addie Broeder	Music - Vocal Solo	Busy Buzzers	Red
Russell Kern/DJ Wyant	Music - Guitar/Vocal	Ell. Energizers/Eureka Hom.	Red
Ellinwood Energizers	Talent - Skit		Purple
Cow Creek	Talent - Skit		Blue (1st Alt.)
Busy Buzzers	Talent - Skit		Blue (2nd Alt.)
Hoisington Jets	Talent - Skit		Blue
Catarina Debes	Talent - Jr. Dance	Cow Creek	Purple
Lydia Suchy	Talent - Jr. Dance	Busy Buzzers	Blue (1st Alt.)

2026 4-H Club Day Results

Regional Club Day eligible entries are highlighted in green.

Michelle Broeder	Talent - Jr. Readings	Busy Buzzers	Purple
Hannah Suchy	Talent - Jr. Readings	Busy Buzzers	Blue (1st Alt.)
Clementyne Norris	Talent - Jr. Readings	Ellinwood Energizers	Blue (2nd Alt.)
Nixxon Luker	Talent - Jr. Readings	Ellinwood Energizers	Blue
Samantha Negaard	Talent - Sr. Readings	Busy Buzzers	Purple
Willow Braddy	Talent - Sr. Readings	Hoisington Jets	Blue (1st Alt.)
Jillian Axman	Talent - Sr. Readings	Hoisington Jets	Blue (2nd Alt.)
Kaelynn Axman	Talent - Sr. Readings	Hoisington Jets	Blue
Melody Braddy	Talent - Sr. Readings	Hoisington Jets	Blue

All youth and clubs highlighted in green are eligible to advance and compete at Regional Club Days on March 13.
Please reach out to Ben as soon as possible to let him know if you plan to attend Regionals or not.

Congratulations to everyone, and great job on all your hard work!

If you qualified for Regional Club Days, and plan to attend, please let Ben know ASAP. If you aren't planning to attend, then we want to be sure and give our alternates the choice to attend.

An email has been sent out to all participants with more detailed information.

Thank you all for making Barton County 4-H great!



International Exchanges with 4-H



A letter from our Kansas 4-H Program Leader, Dr. Sarah Maass.

Why participate in International Exchanges with 4-H?

Have you ever wondered what life is like in another country—or how 4-H connects youth across the globe? Traveling to another country or hosting a delegate from another country through 4-H offers an incredible opportunity for families to learn, grow, and make lifelong memories.

Why It Matters for Youth

- **See the World Differently**
Travel abroad or host a student from another country. You'll experience new traditions, foods, and ways of life—far beyond what you see online.
- **Make Friends Around the Globe**
Imagine having a friend in Japan, Costa Rica, Norway, or another country! These connections often last a lifetime.
- **Level Up Your Skills**
Adapt to new situations, learn to communicate across language barriers, and grow as a leader. These experiences will help you succeed anywhere, and a bonus is that they look great on college applications.

Why Parents Love It

- **Expand Their Worldview**
Experiencing life in another community firsthand helps youth appreciate different perspectives and develop empathy—skills essential for success in today's global society.
- **Build Independence and Confidence**
Living in a new environment or hosting an exchange delegate teaches adaptability, problem-solving, and resilience.
- **Safe and Supported**
Programs in 4-H prioritize safety and provide guidance every step of the way, so you can feel confident your child is in good hands.

Shared Benefits for Families

- **Create Lifelong Connections**
International exchanges often lead to friendships that span continents, providing your family with a global network of support and opportunities.
- **Share Your Story**
You'll represent your community and 4-H while learning how youth programs work in other countries.

Ready to start your adventure?

Look for exchange opportunities throughout the year. Whether you travel abroad or host an exchange delegate, you'll gain experiences that last a lifetime.



Youth Leadership Corner



Junior Leaders February 16th 6 pm

February 16th 6 pm

4-H Council February 16th 7:30 pm

February 16th 7:30 pm

Council committees meet before the meeting at 7 pm on meeting nights, or may schedule meetings at other times. The Awards Committee will need to meet to gameplan for Expo II awards.

Please feel free to reach out to your club's representatives or Council officers with questions.

President: *Kassie Linsner*

Vice President: *Samantha Negaard*

Secretary: *Callie Loesch*

Treasurer: *Kaisha Woydziak*

Reporters: *Kiera Wyant & Jillian Axman* Parliamentarian: *Adessa Prosser*

Meetings are held in person at the 4-H Educational Building (Hwy 281) or via Zoom Conference Call. December's meeting will be held in person, weather-dependent.



4-H Ambassadors



Your 4-H Program 2025-2026 Ambassadors are:

Russell Kern, Samantha Negaard, Melody Braddy, Jonas Kern, DJ Wyant, Callie Loesch, and Kiera Wyant

This month, we are going to highlight a message from Ambassador DJ Wyant.

"Hi! My name is DJ, and I'm part of the Eureka Homesteaders 4-H Club where I have been the President for 3 years. I have been in 4-H for 10 years and an ambassador for 2 years. 4-H has benefited my life in so many ways from leadership skills to public speaking. Through 4-H, I have been active in archery, rocketry, baking, and showing both chickens and rabbits. I would recommend every kid to at least try 4-H because I have had so many opportunities and fun experiences I never would have had if it was not for the opportunities in 4-H." ~DJ Wyant

Do you have friends or family members who you think would be interested in being impacted in this way? Well, invite them to join 4-H! You all are our greatest advocates for 4-H recruitment.



Beyond Ready



Leader's Corner



Club Leaders - Please visit with your club's 4-H Council Representatives so that they are aware of their role and responsibility to attend 4-H council and fulfill their elected duties. They serve as the conduit of information between the club and the county-wide 4-H program.

Barton County Youth Entrepreneurship Challenge - Please encourage youth to consider entering the upcoming Youth Entrepreneurship Challenge that will be in Great Bend on March 4th. This is a great chance for youth to test their skills and win some prize money to support their small business. More information can be found on the [Great Bend Economic Development](#) site.

Volunteer hour tracking - I ask that our registered volunteers begin sending me how many youth are at your meetings (project meetings included), and how long you meet for. I'm just looking for "where we met, had 5 kids there, and met for 2 hours". This helps with reporting, and I would also like to start getting a feel for the hours our volunteers are putting in. I don't expect you to report every single hour spent toward 4-H, because I know that number is high, and I don't want to add a ton extra to your already full plates. I have created a form for you to use that can be found on the next page.

Volunteer Meeting - Starting on March 17th (12:15-12:45), I will begin holding 4-H Volunteer Meetings every other month here at the Extension Office. This will serve as time to check in with you all, connect better, and hear from you about what you need to be successful. I encourage you to reach out at any time, but hope these scheduled times can serve us both well in the task of strengthening our 4-H Program. If attending over Zoom would serve you better, please let me know, and I can get that set up.

Livestock Judging & Skill-A-Thon - I am exploring the possibility of scheduling regular times for 4-H Youth to gather and practice livestock judging and Skill-A-Thon skills. I would hope to have a team of 4-Hers to send to the State 4-H Livestock Sweepstakes contest in August. Please chat with your 4-H Club members to see if there are any who would be interested.

4-H Volunteer: Hour and Direct Contact Tracking Form

Name of Volunteer(s): _____

Event (please circle one and state what project):

Community Club Meeting *Project Meeting*: _____

Project Fair *Officer Training*

Other: _____

Number of contacts made: _____

Number of hours: _____

Date: _____ Meeting Location: _____

Thank you for submitting! Tracking the hours of our 4-H Volunteers is helpful to K-State Extension Professionals with their reporting expectations, and in tracking the impact you make in the lives of 4-H Youth.



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2026 K-STATE JUNIOR BEEF PRODUCER DAY

Program

Join us on March 7, 2026, for the biennial K-State Junior Beef Producer Day! This event is a fun-filled educational day for youth, parents, beef project leaders, ag teachers, and extension agents to expand their knowledge of youth beef projects. Presentations by K-State faculty, staff, K-State livestock judging team members, students, and guest speakers will cover topics that may include selection, nutrition, daily care, meat science, reproduction, health, grooming, and showmanship. An optional YQCA certification class will be offered at the end of the day. A complimentary lunch and t-shirt will also be provided for those who register by the deadline. The registration fee is \$20 per person for those who sign up by February 13. The fee will increase to \$30 per person for those who register after the deadline. Only those who register by February 13 will receive a t-shirt. This is a family event! Anyone attending the event must register, including youth and adults.

Registration

Deadline: February 13

Fee: \$20/person

Registration Link: <https://bit.ly/BeefJrProducer>

Late Registration: \$30/person (after February 13)

*All attendees must register, including youth & adults.

**Late registrants will not receive a t-shirt.



March 7

Tentative Schedule

8:00AM	Check-in
9:00AM	Welcome
9:15AM	Project Selection
10:00AM	Morning Breakout Sessions -Nutrition, Meat Science, Daily Care, Grooming & Fitting
Noon	Lunch
1:00PM	Afternoon Breakout Sessions -Health, Reproduction, Showmanship
3:15PM	Dismissal
3:30PM	Optional YQCA Class

Registration Due February 13

Questions?
Lexie Hayes



785.532.1264



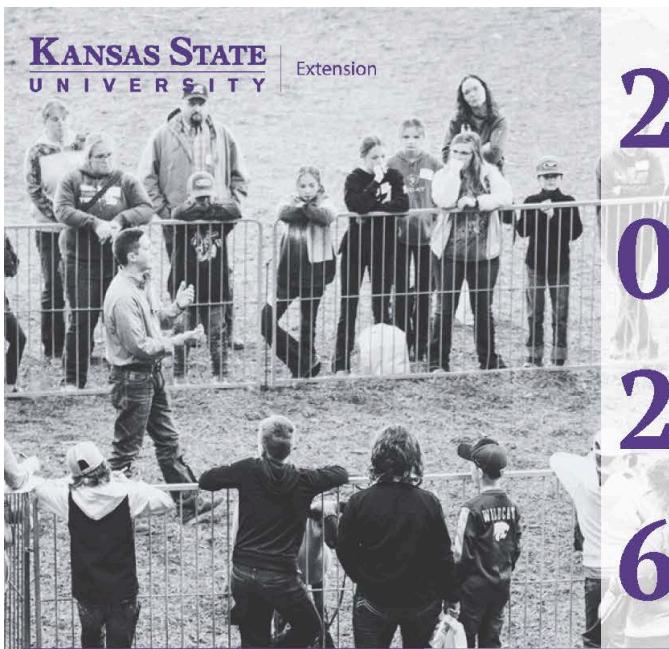
adhayes@ksu.edu



K-State, County Extension Councils, Extension Districts, and U.S. Department of Agriculture Cooperating. All educational programs and materials available without discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, or disability.

KANSAS STATE
UNIVERSITY
Extension

Register at <https://bit.ly/BeefJrProducer>



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K-State Junior Sheep Producer Day



Date

4.11.2026

Manhattan, KS



Scan Me!



Registration

Due: 3.20.2026

Cost: \$20/person

<https://bit.ly/SheepJrProducer>

**All adults & youth must register to attend.*

***Only those registered by 3/20/26 will receive a t-shirt.*

****Late registration is \$30/person.*



Questions

Lexie Hayes



785.532.1264



adhayes@ksu.edu

Program

Join us for the biennial K-State Junior Sheep Producer Day on Saturday, April 11, 2026. Presentations will be provided by featured guests, as well as K-State faculty, staff, and students. This event will be an educational day of activities in which youth, parents, extension agents, ag teachers, and sheep project leaders can increase their knowledge of youth sheep project selection and management. A variety of topics will be shared, including an optional YQCA certification at the end of the day. All ages and skill levels are invited! Lunch and a t-shirt are included. The registration fee is \$20/person for those who sign up by March 20 or \$30/person for those who register after that date. Only those who register by the deadline will receive a t-shirt. This is a family event! Anyone attending, including both youth and adults, must register. There will be an optional tour of the sheep and meat goat center offered on Friday evening and Saturday after jr. day.

Tentative Schedule

Friday, April 10

5:00-7:00PM Optional Tour of Sheep & Goat Center

Saturday, April 11

8:00AM Check-in

9:00AM Welcome

9:15AM Selection

10:00AM Nutrition

10:45AM Morning Breakout Sessions

-facilities & equipment, reproduction, project management purchase to show

NOON Lunch

1:00PM Health

1:45PM Afternoon Breakout Sessions

-wool, showmanship, clipping & grooming

3:45PM Dismissal

4:00PM Optional YQCA Class

4:00-6:00PM Optional Sheep & Goat Center Tour



K-State, County Extension Councils, Extension Districts, and U.S. Department of Agriculture Cooperating.
All educational programs and materials available without discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion,
national origin, sex, age, or disability.



Register at <https://bit.ly/SheepJrProducer>



Kansas 4-H Day with K-State Women's Basketball



K-State Wildcats Vs.

Iowa State

WILL BE TELEVISED



Step 1: Pick a Package:

\$28 Package Includes:

- Ticket
- \$10 Concession Voucher
- T-Shirt

\$18 Package Includes:

- Ticket
- \$10 Concession Voucher

Step 2: Register to get Tickets:

Use the QR Code or the link to register



<https://tinyurl.com/5x84fp33>

- Pick up ticket packages on game day 10:00 am - 12:30 pm Location TBA closer to event.
- Doors open for the general public at 12:00 pm
- Tip-off at 1:00 pm

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<https://www.apa.org/topics/resilience>

Online registration
for this event will
be due February 8,
2026. No paper
registrations will
be accepted.

Sunday, March 1, @ 1:00 PM

Register at [http://tinyurl.com/4HDaywiththeCats2026](https://tinyurl.com/4HDaywiththeCats2026)